**Research-Standard Project Outline**

**Program:** Foundational Program, Agriculture and Food Research Initiative Competitive Grants Program

**Agency:** USDA-NIFA (National Institute of Food and Agriculture)

**Submission Method:** Grants.gov

**Due Date:** Varies by Program Area Priority; some Program Area Priorities require Letters of Intent

**Formatting Instructions:**

* Font size must be at least 12 point
* Margins must be at least one inch in all directions
* Line spacing must not exceed six lines of text per vertical inch
* Follow the page limitations for each attachment
* Number pages sequentially for each attachment
* Title each attachment in the document header and save each file with the referenced name

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| *This outline is designed to address key portions of the AFRI proposal package preparation process; however, it does not address all of the elements required to complete the Grants.gov application package or the budget. Those instructions are available in the RFA and the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.* |

**R&R COVER SHEET**

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 2. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

**R&R PROJECT/PERFORMANCE SITE LOCATION(S)**

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 3. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

**R&R Other Project Information**

**Field 7 – Project Summary/Abstract: 250-word limit**

* Title the document “Project Summary” in the header and save the file as “ProjectSummary.”
* Use the template available at:

<http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/templates/project_summary.doc>

* The summary should be a self-contained, specific description of the activity to be undertaken. It should focus on the overall project goal(s) and supporting objectives, plans (i.e., methods) to accomplish the project goals, and the relevance of the project to the goals of the Foundational Program area.
* It should be suitable for public dissemination, should not contain proprietary/confidential information, and insofar as possible, should be understandable to a scientifically or technically literate lay reader.
* List the project title and the names and institutions of the PD and co-PDs.

**Field 8 – Project Narrative: 18-page limit (including all figures and tables)**

Title the document “Project Narrative” in the header and save the file as “ProjectNarrative.” The Project Narrative must include all of the following:

**1. Response to Previous Review (if applicable)**

This requirement only applies to Resubmitted and Resubmitted Renewal Applications. The Project Narrative attachment should include two components: 1) a one-page response to the previous review panel summary titled “Response to Previous Review” as the first page and 2) the 18-page Project Narrative.

**2. Project Narrative**

***a. Introduction***

* Include a clear statement of the **long-term goal(s)** and **supporting objectives** of the project.
* Summarize the body of knowledge or past activities that substantiate the need for the project.
* Describe ongoing or recently completed activities significant to the proposed project, including the work of key project personnel.
* Include preliminary data/information pertinent to the proposed project.
* All works cited should be referenced (see Bibliography & References Cited).

***b. Rationale and Significance***

**1. Rationale** – Concisely present the rationale behind the proposed project.

**2. Relationship to the AFRI Program Area Priority** – Describe the specific relationship of the project’s objectives to one of the Program Area Priorities. Applications that do not address a Program Area Priority will not be reviewed.

**3. Contribution to U.S. Agriculture and Food Systems** – Clearly describe the project’s potential for long-term improvement in and sustainability of U.S. agriculture and food systems. Any novel ideas or contributions that the project offers should also be discussed.

***c. Approach***

The activities proposed and problem(s) being addressed must be clearly stated, and the approaches to be applied must be clearly described. Specifically, this section must include:

**1. Activities** – A description of theactivities proposed and the sequence in which the activities are to be performed. If international activities are proposed, applicants must clearly describe and demonstrate how international activities will contribute to and support advances in American agriculture.

**2. Methods** – A description of the methods to be used in carrying out the proposed project, including the feasibility of the methods.

**3. Expected Outcomes** – A description of the specific, measurable outcomes expected from the proposed activities. If international activities are proposed, applicants must describe indicators that will be used to assess those activities. Appropriate indicators include but are not limited to those posted at the U.S. Government's Feed the Future global food security initiative Web site ([www.feedthefuture.gov/progress](http://www.feedthefuture.gov/progress)).

**4. Data Analysis/Interpretation** – Describe the means by which results will be analyzed, assessed, or interpreted.

**5. Results/Products** – Describe how results or products will be used.

**6. Potential Pitfalls, Limitations, and Hazards –** Describe the potentialpitfalls of the proposed project and the potential limitations of the proposed methods *and* the plans for addressing both. Provide a full explanation of any materials, procedures, situations, or activities related to the project that may be hazardous to personnel, along with an outline or precautions to be exercised to avoid or mitigate the effects of such hazards.

**7. Timeline –** Provide a timeline for attainment of objectives and for production of deliverables that includes annual milestones with specific, measurable outcomes.

***☼ For Center of Excellence Applicants***

Eligible applicants who wish to be considered as centers of excellence must provide a brief justification statement, as part of the page limit of the Project Narrative, describing how they meet the standards of a center of excellence, based on the following criteria:

1. the ability of the center of excellence to ensure coordination and cost effectiveness by reducing unnecessarily duplicative efforts regarding research, teaching, and extension in the implementation of the proposed research and/or extension activity outlined in this application;
2. in addition to any applicable matching requirements, the ability of the center of excellence to leverage available resources by using public-private partnerships among agricultural industry groups, institutions of higher education, and the Federal Government in the implementation of the proposed research and/or extension activity outlined in this application. Resources leveraged should be commensurate with the size of the award;
3. the planned scope and capability of the center of excellence to implement teaching initiatives to increase awareness and effectively disseminate solutions to target audiences through extension activities in the implementation of the proposed research and/or extension activity outlined in this application; and
4. the ability or capacity of the center of excellence to increase the economic returns to rural communities by identifying, attracting, and directing funds to high-priority agricultural issues in support of and as a result of the implementation of the proposed research and/or extension activity outlined in this application.
5. Where practicable (not required), proposed efforts to improve teaching capacity and infrastructure at colleges and universities.

***☼ For Renewal or Resubmitted Renewal Applications***

Applications must contain a Progress Report.

**Field 9 – Bibliography & References Cited: No page limit**

* Title the attachment as “Bibliography & References Cited” in the document header and save the file as “BibliographyReferencesCited.”
* Provide a bibliography of any references cited in the Project Narrative.
* Each reference must include the names of all authors (in the same sequence in which they appear in the publication), the article and journal title, book title, volume number, page numbers, and year of publication.
* All references must conform to an acceptable journal format and be listed in alphabetical order using the last name of the first author or listed by number in the order of citation.

**Field 10 – Facilities & Other Resources: No page limit**

* Title the attachment as “Facilities & Other Resources” in the document header and save file as “FacilitiesOtherResources.”
* Identify the facilities to be used (Laboratory, Animal, Computer, Office, Clinical, and Other). If appropriate, indicate their capacities, pertinent capabilities, relative proximity, and extent of availability to the project. Describe only those resources that are directly applicable to the proposed work.
* Provide any information describing the Other Resources available to the project (e.g., machine shop, electronic shop) and the extent to which they would be available to the project.

**Field 11 – Equipment: No page limit**

* Title the attachment as “Equipment” in the header and save the file as “Equipment.”
* List major items of equipment already available for this project and, if appropriate, identify location and pertinent capabilities.

**Field 12 – Other Attachments**

***Key Personnel Roles – 2-Page Limit***

* Title the attachment as “Key Personnel” and save file as “KeyPersonnel.”
* Clearly describe the roles and responsibilities of the PD, co-PD(s), collaborator(s), and other key personnel.
* Biographical sketches for key personnel should be attached in the R&R Senior/Key Person Profile.
* If it will be necessary to enter into formal consulting or collaborative arrangements with others, such arrangements should be fully explained and justified.
* If the consultant(s) or collaborator(s) are known at the time of application, a biographical sketch should be provided in the R&R Senior/Key Person Profile.
* Collaborators simply providing services or materials should not be listed in the R&R Senior/Key Person Profile and a biographical sketch is not required.
* Evidence (letters of support) for this type of collaboration should be provided in the ‘Documentation of Collaboration’ (see below). These signed letters should provide evidence that the collaborators involved have agreed to render these services.

***Logic Model – 2-Page Limit (allowable, not required)***

* Title the attachment as “Logic Model” and save file as “LogicModel.”
* Include the elements of a logic model detailing the activities, outputs, and outcomes of the proposed project.
* This information may be provided as a narrative or formatted into a logic model chart.
* Note: The logic model planning process is a tool that should be used to develop your project before writing your application. More information and resources related to the logic model planning process are provided at [www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/integrated/integrated\_logic\_model.html](http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/integrated/integrated_logic_model.html).

***Management Plan – 3-Page Limit (allowable, not required)***

* Title the attachment as “Management Plan” and save file as “ManagementPlan.”
* Identify each institutional unit contributing to the project and designate the lead institution or institutional unit when submitting a cooperative, multi-institutional or multidisciplinary application. Clearly define the programmatic roles, responsibilities, and budget for each institutional partner.
* Include an organizational chart, administrative timeline, and a description of how the project will be governed, as well as a strategy to enhance coordination, collaboration, communication, and data sharing and reporting among members of the project team and stakeholder groups.
* Address how the project will be sustained beyond termination of an award.
* Include an advisory group of principal stakeholders, partners, and professionals to assess and evaluate the quality, expected measurable outcomes, and potential impacts for the proposed project. Please include rationale for their role, and how they will function effectively to support the goals and objectives of the project.
* Demonstrate how partners and stakeholders contribute to project assessment on an annual basis.

***Documentation of Collaboration – No Page Limit***

* Title the attachment as “Documentation of Collaboration” in the document header and save file as “Collaboration.”
* Provide evidence (e.g., letter[s] of support) that the collaborators involved have agreed to render services. The applicant also will be required to provide additional information on consultants and collaborators in the budget portion of the application.

***Preprints – Limited to 2 preprints***

* Title the attachment as “Preprints” in the document header and save file as “Preprints.”
* Preprints related to the Project Narrative are allowed if they are directly germane to the proposed project. Information may not be appended to an application to circumvent page limitations prescribed for the Project Narrative.
* Only manuscripts in press for a peer-reviewed journal will be accepted and must be accompanied by letters of acceptance from the publishing journals.
* Preprints attached in support of the application should be single-spaced.
* Each preprint must be identified with the name of the submitting organization, the name(s) of the PD(s), and the title of the application.

***Appendices to Project Narrative***

* Appendices to the Project Narrative are allowed if they are directly germane to the proposed project.
* Do not use the addition of appendices to circumvent the text and/or figures and tables page limitations.

**R&R Senior/Key Person Profile**

* A Senior/Key Person Profile should be completed for the PD and each co-PD, senior associate, and other professional personnel, including collaborators playing an active role in the project.
* Collaborators only providing services or materials should not be listed in this section.
* Elements include:
  + *Project Role Field* – Complete appropriately.
  + *Other Project Role Category Field* – Complete appropriately, if applicable.
  + *Biographical Sketch: 2-page limit (excluding publications listings)*
    - Title the attachment “Biographical Sketch” in the header and save file as “BiographicalSketch” followed by the last name of the individual.
    - The biographical sketch should include a presentation of academic and research credentials, as applicable (e.g., earned degrees, teaching experience, employment history, professional activities, honors and awards, and grants received).
    - Recommended headings are: Education and Training, Research and Professional Experience, Publications, and Synergistic Activities.
    - Include a chronological list of all publications in refereed journals during the past four years, including those in press. Also, list only those non-refereed technical publications that have relevance to the proposed project. All authors should be listed in the same order as they appear on each paper cited, along with the title and complete reference as these usually appear in journals.
    - **The Conflict of Interest list should NOT be included** **in the biographical sketch**, but it must be provided as a separate document.
  + *Current and Pending Support: No page limit*
    - Title the attachment “Current and Pending Support” in the header and save file as “CurrentPendingSupport” followed by the last name of the individual.
    - Use the template available at [www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/templates/current\_pending.doc](http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/templates/current_pending.doc)
    - Current and Pending Support is only required for the PD and co-PDs.
    - As an addendum, provide a brief summary of any completed, current, or pending projects that appear similar to the current application, especially previous National Research Initiative (NRI) or AFRI awards.
    - See RFA and the template for complete details on what should be included in Current and Pending Support.

**R&R Personal Data**

Instructions related to this form are explained in detail in Part V, 6. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide. Submission of this information is voluntary.

**R&R Budget and Budget Justification**

See the RFA and the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide, and work with appropriate IANR Business Center personnel to develop this application component.

**Supplemental Information Form**

**Field 2 – Program to which you are applying**

Enter the Program (Area Priority) Code Name and Program (Area Priority) Code for the Program Area Priority to which you are applying. An application can only be submitted to one program (Area Priority). **This information must match the RFA exactly and be spelled correctly.**

**Field 8 – Conflict of Interest List: No page limit**

* Title the attachment as “Conflict of Interest” in the header and save file as “ConflictofInterest.”
* A Conflict of Interest List is required for all applications submitted to AFRI. The Conflict of Interest List should be provided as a separate PDF attachment and **not included in the Biographical Sketch*.*** A Conflict of Interest List must be completed individually for all personnel who have submitted a Biographical Sketch.
* **Collate all individual Conflict of Interest lists into a single document file.** The lists can only be submitted as a single PDF document.
* Use the template available at:

[www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/templates/conflict\_of\_interest.doc](http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/templates/conflict_of_interest.doc)

**AFRI PROJECT TYPE FORM**

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part VI, 2. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide and in the RFA.